

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

Section 11.1	Purpose	11-2
Section 11.2	Applicability	11-2
Section 11.3	Signs Exempt for Permitting Requirements	11-3
Section 11.4	Prohibited Signs	11-6
Section 11.5	Obsolete and Abandoned Signs	11-7
Section 11.6	Traffic Hazards and Sign Illumination	11-8
Section 11.7	Permit Procedures	11-8
Section 11.8	Residential Zoning District Sign Regulations	11-9
Section 11.9	Non-Residential Zoning District Sign Regulations	11-10
Section 11.10	Noncompliance	11-12

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

Section 11.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to:

- (A) Enhance and protect the physical appearance of the Town while promoting the economic well-being of the community by creating a favorable physical image.
- (B) Promote public safety and traffic safety by ensuring that signs are properly designed, constructed, installed and maintained, especially in an area susceptible to high winds, hurricanes, and extreme weather conditions.
- (C) Minimize distractions and/or obstruction of views that contribute to traffic hazards and endanger public safety.
- (D) Promote high standards of quality development by encouraging appropriately designed, placed, and sized signage.
- (E) Preserve the value of property by assuring the compatibility of signs with surrounding land uses
- (F) Enhance the overall appearance and scenic value of the landscape and preserve the unique natural environment that distinguishes the Town.
- (G) Provide an effective guide for communicating identification through signage while preventing signs from dominating the visual appearance of the areas in which they are located.

Section 11.2 Applicability

- (A) Signs may only be erected, affixed, placed, painted, or otherwise established in accordance with the standards provided herein. Certain signs are exempt from permitting (Section 11.3) but are still subject to standards provided.
- (B) No sign shall be placed in the right-of-way (unless exempted from this requirement) and all signs shall be constructed and designed, according to generally accepted engineering practices, to withstand wind pressures and load distribution as specified in the current building code.
- (C) It is also acknowledged that the Town's economic well-being is heavily dependent on tourism. This dependence makes the preservation of the environment from unreasonable signs a matter of critical importance to the Town.
- (D) Signs are regulated on the basis of the zoning district in which they are displayed and five (5) design features: type of sign, size of sign, height of sign, location of sign, and type of illumination used. All signs shall be erected, altered, and maintained in accordance herewith.
- (E) The Town shall be exempted from these regulations in order to promote the community interest.

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

Section 11.3 Signs Exempt from Permitting Requirements

A permit is not required for the following types of signs or sign alterations; however, they must comply with all other applicable sections of this article and the standards of this section.

- (A) Traffic directional signs, provided the signs are no greater than four (4) square feet in area and are limited to three (3) feet in height above the adjacent grade.
- (B) Address signs, private street or road name signs meeting the NCDOT and Brunswick County 911 addressing standards as to size, color, and placement. Such signs may be illuminated.
- (C) Signs directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property not exceeding four (4) square feet for each sign with a maximum height limitation of three (3) feet. A maximum of one such sign shall be permitted at each point of ingress or egress to a parking area.
- (D) Pavement markings of a traffic directional nature consistent with standard and customary markings used by the Town and NCDOT.
- (E) Signs not visible beyond the boundaries of the lot or parcel upon which they are situated or from any public right-of-way or public body of water.
- (F) Changing copy on a legal bulletin board or maintenance where no structural changes are made, or the changing of the interchangeable letters on signs designed for them, or the changing of the color of illumination systems.
- (G) Holiday season decorations.
- (H) Historical markers, memorial signs, or plaques provided that all such symbols, plaques and identification emblems shall be placed flat against a building and be less than three (3) square feet.
- (I) Integral decorative features of buildings, except letters, trademarks, moving lights or moving parts.
- (J) Fence-wrap signs affixed to fences surrounding a construction site may be allowed in accordance with NCGS 160A-381(j).
- (K) Safety Signage

Each lot is permitted the use of safety signs subject to the following. Lots which may have construction or an open building permit are subject to the following standards:

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

- (1) The aggregate sign face area for all safety signage on a lot shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
 - (2) No single safety sign shall exceed four (4) square feet of sign face area.
 - (3) No lot shall include more than 16 individual safety signs (for the purposes of this section a two-sided sign may be counted as a single sign).
 - (4) The top of a safety sign shall not be greater than five (5) feet above the adjacent grade.
 - (5) Safety signs shall not be illuminated.
- (L) Yard Signs. Each lot in a residential zoning district shall be allowed one (1) yard sign not exceeding six (6) square feet or four (4) feet in height. Such sign shall not be constructed utilizing wood, cement, steel, or other similar structures of a permanent nature. Such sign shall be easily removed and placement thereof shall not be of a permanent fashion.
- (M) Temporary Yard Signs. Each lot that is for sale, or has a structure listed for sale or rent, shall be allowed up to one temporary yard sign on the premises, subject to the following standards:
- (1) One (1) temporary yard sign not exceeding six (6) square feet for residential zoning districts may be allowed while said property is listed for sale or rent. Maximum height shall be four (4) feet in residential districts.
 - (2) One (1) temporary sign not exceeding eight (8) square feet for non-residential zoning districts may be allowed while said property is listed for sale or rent. Maximum height shall be six (6) feet in non-residential districts.
 - (3) Temporary yard signs shall not be illuminated.
- (N) Temporary Banners
- (1) Each lot or commercial establishment, may have one (1) temporary banner sign per street frontage not exceeding thirty two (32) square feet in non-residential zoning districts. Maximum height shall be four (4) feet in non-residential districts (MB-1, MB-2, BB-1, RI, MUD).
 - (2) These signs may remain in place for up to fourteen (14) days for three (3) times per year with a minimum thirty (30) day separation.
 - (3) Temporary banners shall not be illuminated.
 - (4) Temporary banners shall be secured and designed so as to withstand high winds.

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

(O) Special Event Signs

- (1) Special Events are defined as events that have a community-wide impact, usually involve the use of or closing of streets, use of Town facilities and staff, require a Town permit, or are an event not otherwise classified as a temporary event. Such events include, circuses, concerts, festivals, street fairs, road races, and other such activities. Signage for such events are subject to the following standards.
- (2) All temporary banner signs under this provision may be erected no more than 3 weeks prior to the event and shall be removed no later than 48 hours after the event has concluded, unless expressly stated in the Section. For any event lasting more than 2 consecutive days or for events that are recurring weekly up to 25 weeks, signs located on the site of the event may remain on the site for the duration of the event, but shall be placed and removed as expressed herein.
- (3) Special Event Signs will be required to meet the standards of the Town's regulations regarding special events.

(P) Temporary Off-Premise Event Signs

- (1) Temporary off premise signs are limited to up to two (2) signs per event, with adjoining property owner's permission and shall be at least a minimum of five (5) feet from the designated road surface. Signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet.
- (2) These signs may remain in place for up to 14 days.
- (3) Signs shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours following the event.

(Q) Temporary Legal Notices

- (1) Signs shall be placed as required by state law pending regulatory action and an associated hearing regarding a particular property. Signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet.
- (2) Signs shall be removed immediately following such action.

(R) The flying of up to three (3) flags (not to include feather flags):

- (1) Size shall not exceed four (4) by six (6) feet.
- (2) All three (3) flags may be flown on a single flagpole or individual flagpoles but not to exceed three (3) flags.
- (3) Any flagpole shall not exceed a height of 25 feet, including any base securing the flagpole.

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

(S) Election signs

Sign placement and duration shall be in accordance with NCGS 136-32 in the NCDOT right-of-way. During the period beginning on the 30th day before the beginning date of "one-stop" early voting under G.S. 163-227.2 and ending on the 10th day after the primary or election day, subject to the following provisions:

- (1) Right-of-way Sign Placement. A person must obtain the permission of any property owner of a residence, business, or religious institution fronting the right-of-way where a sign would be erected. Signs must be placed in accordance with the following:
 - (a) No sign shall be permitted in the right-of-way of a fully controlled access highway.
 - (b) No sign shall be closer than three feet from the edge of the pavement of the road.
 - (c) No sign shall obscure motorist visibility at an intersection.
 - (d) No sign shall be higher than 42 inches above the edge of the pavement of the road.
 - (e) No sign shall be larger than 864 square inches.
 - (f) No sign shall obscure or replace another sign.
 - (g) No sign shall be allowed within the Town right-of-way.
- (2) Private property Sign Placement. The regulations under Section 11.3(L) Yard Signs shall not be in effect nor enforced during the period beginning on the 30th day before the beginning date of "one-stop" early voting under G.S. 163-227.2 and ending on the 10th day after the primary or election day.
- (3) The party responsible for erecting the sign shall be held responsible for any violations.

Section 11.4 Prohibited Signs

The following signs are prohibited:

- (A) Any sign not specifically permitted under Article 11 or any sign that is not specifically exempted from this Article is prohibited from being erected and subject to removal and fees as set forth in the Town's fee schedule.
- (B) Any signs on benches and refuse containers.
- (C) Electronic message centers/Digitally animated signs
- (D) Portable Signs
- (E) A-Frame Signs
- (F) Feather Flags

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

- (G) Mobile Signs
- (H) Snipe Signs
- (I) Signs attached or painted to piers or bulkheads except for one (1) on-premise building identification sign not to exceed four (4) square feet per establishment.
- (J) Pavement markings, except those of a customary traffic control nature.
- (K) Signs of material including but not limited to paper, paint, cardboard, plastic, wood and metal which are painted on or attached to trees, lampposts, hydrants, traffic signs, rocks or other natural features, telephone or utility poles.
- (L) Any permanent off-premise signs, including billboards.
- (M) Balloons, streamers, spinners, posters, placards, pennants or inflatable devices.
- (N) Any sign, sign structure, or portion thereof (other than freestanding signs), which extends above the top of the wall parapet, building roof line, and/or the facade of any building. Signs shall not be placed on any roof.
- (O) Any sign or outdoor advertising display which contains statements, words or pictures of an obscene character as defined in G.S. 14-190.1 such as will offend public morals or decency.
- (P) Any sign which restricts or appears to reserve any portion of the public right-of-way or any public property for the exclusive use or private uses of any individual, tenant, client, guests or business. This prohibition extends to all such signs, whether on public property or private property.
- (Q) Glass tubes filled with neon, argon, krypton or others used to construct a sign or used in a manner similar to festoon lighting exceeding three (3) square feet in size.
- (R) Prohibited advertisement of illegal activities in the State.
- (S) No sign shall be attached to or placed against the outside of a building in such a manner as to prevent ingress and egress through any door or window, nor shall any sign obstruct or be attached to a fire escape.
- (T) Any sign or flag the UDO Administrator deems to be significantly worn, torn, dilapidated, damaged, tattered, or otherwise in disrepair. Such signs may be removed by the UDO Administrator sixty (60) days after written notice to the owner.

Section 11.5 Obsolete and Abandoned Signs.

Nonconforming signs or signs serving a vacant building or site that has not been in use for 180 days or more shall be deemed to be an abandoned sign and shall be removed. The obsolete or

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

abandoned sign may be removed by the UDO Administrator within sixty (60) days of notice to the owner at the owner's expense.

Section 11.6 General Standards

- (A) No floodlights shall be utilized as a part of a sign illumination system which are not hooded or shielded so that the light source is not visible from any public right-of-way or adjacent property, nor shall any sign otherwise reflect or emit a glaring light so as to impair driving vision.
- (B) No sign illumination system shall contain or utilize any beacon, spot, searchlight or stroboscopic light or reflector which is visible from any public right-of-way or adjacent property; nor shall such lights be operated outside, under any circumstances, except by authorized public agencies.
- (C) No sign shall display lights resembling by color and design or other characteristics customarily associated with danger of those used by police, fire, ambulance and other emergency vehicles or for navigation. Automotive warning or flashing signs shall not be utilized as commercial attention-seizing devices.
- (D) No sign is permitted which, due to its position, shape, color, format or illumination, obstructs the view of or may be confused with an official traffic sign, signal or device or any other official sign, or which uses the words "stop," "warning," "danger," or similar words implying the existence of danger or the need for stopping or maneuvering.
- (E) No sign shall rotate or otherwise move.
- (F) No sign shall obstruct the view of motor vehicle operators entering a public roadway from any vehicular access, driveway, street or alley. See Article 2, Section 2.08 Sight Visibility Triangle.
- (G) Setbacks. In the absence of a specific sign setback, all signs and sign structures must be located at least five (5) feet from any property line and outside of all sight visibility triangles (See Article 2, Section 2.08 Sight Visibility Triangle).
- (H) Sign Area Calculation.
 - (1) In measuring the area of signs permitted under these regulations, the entire face of the sign (one (1) side only), and any wall work incidental to its decoration, shall be included. Where both sides of a sign contain lettering or other allowable display, one (1) side only shall be used to compute the allowable size of the sign.
 - (2) Where the sign consists of individual letters or a sign face of irregular shape, the sign area shall include the area of the smallest rectangle that can encompass the letters or sign face.

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

- (3) In calculating the total area of a monument sign, the first two (2) feet of the height of the base shall be excluded, providing that this portion of the base does not contain any lettering or graphics.

Section 11.7 Permit Procedures

The UDO Administrator or his/her designee shall issue a sign permit for the erection or construction only for a sign which meets the requirements of this article and is not subject to exemption as provided in Section 11.3. Each application shall be accompanied by a plan showing the following:

- (A) Name and address of the owner of the sign.
- (B) Exact size, shape, configuration, design, area, height, nature, number and type of sign to be erected.
 - (1) To calculate sign area, the following should be included: the entire face of a sign, computed as the extreme limits of the lettering or other display, together with any integral part of the background of the lettering or display, but not including the support framework, bracing, fence or wall upon which it is placed when such is clearly incidental to the display itself. In the case of a double faced sign, only one side is considered in computing sign area.
 - (2) Height of sign means the vertical distance measured from the adjacent street crown grade to the top of the sign face or sign structure, whichever is greater.
- (C) The value of the sign or sign structure.
- (D) The method and type of illumination, if any.
- (E) The location proposed for such signs in relation to property lines, zoning district boundaries, right-of-way lines, and existing signs.
- (F) A graphic representation (hand drawn if necessary), including color scheme, lighting, and landscaping of the proposed sign.
- (G) If conditions warrant it, such additional information as will enable the UDO Administrator to determine if such sign is to be erected in conformance with the requirements of this article.
- (H) Before issuing a sign permit, the applicant shall pay all fees as set forth in the Town's fee schedule.

Section 11.8 Residential Zoning District Sign Regulations

In a residential zoning district the following signs shall be permitted in accordance with the standards provided (MR-1, MR-2, MR-3, BR-1, BR-2, MH-1, & MH-2):

- (A) Up to two (2) ground-mounted or monument signs per subdivision entrance may be utilized, provided each sign does not exceed sixty-four (64) square feet in area,

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

fourteen (14) feet in length, and six (6) feet in height. They must be neatly constructed of plastic, masonry, treated wood, and sandblasted wood, excluding wooden lattice sheets, and must be colored in earth tone shades.

- (B) Each monument sign shall be required to have landscaping and plantings installed at the time of sign installation with review and approval by the UDO Administrator. The landscaping shall surround the base of the sign, extending at least three (3) feet beyond both ends of the sign and at least six (6) feet beyond each face of the sign. Landscaping shall only require shrubs and/or ground cover and shall be planted thirty-two (32) inches or less apart on centers.
- (C) Residential Structure Wall Signs. Each residential structure may have up to two (2) wall signs. The following regulations apply:
 - (1) One of the two allowed signs may be wall mounted and may not exceed eight (8) square feet.
 - (2) The other allowed sign may be wall mounted or mounted on piles for elevated structures and may not exceed three (3) square feet.
 - (3) These signs shall not be illuminated.
 - (4) These signs do not include address identification as regulated under Article 2, Section 2.23 Street Address Display.
 - (5) A two-family dwelling (duplex) will count each unit as a separate residential structure.

Section 11.9 Non-Residential Zoning District Sign Regulations

In a non-residential zoning district the following signs shall be permitted in accordance with the standards provided (MB-1, MB-2, BB-1, RI, MUD), in addition to those permitted in residential zoning districts.

Signs allowed: Each property may have one (1) monument or freestanding. Individual establishments may have one (1) of the following, with establishments on corner lots allowed two (2): Wall Sign (includes window signs); Blade Sign (Projecting Signs); or Awning Sign.

11.9.1 Monument or Freestanding Signs

- (A) One (1) monument or freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot.
 - (1) Maximum height allowed is sixteen (16) feet and the maximum allowed total signage area is sixty four (64) feet.
 - (2) Each monument sign shall be required to have landscaping and plantings installed at the time of sign installation with review and approval by the UDO Administrator. The landscaping shall surround the base of the sign, extending

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

at least three (3) feet beyond both ends of the sign and at least six (6) feet beyond each face of the sign. Landscaping shall only require shrubs and/or ground cover and shall be planted thirty-two (32) inches or less apart on centers.

- (B) Shopping centers and/or business condominium development may provide one (1) freestanding sign for the center. Such signs shall not exceed a sign surface area of sixty four (64) square feet relating to the center or development plus twelve (12) square feet relating to each individual tenant business within the shopping center.
- (C) No freestanding sign structure requiring a permit shall coexist on the same parcel with any other freestanding sign unless the parcel has more than five hundred (500) feet of principal street frontage, in which case no two (2) signs shall be located closer than five hundred (500) feet from one another.
- (D) For the purposes of this section, Fuel Station Canopies shall be considered freestanding signs and shall be regulated as follows:
 - (1) The sign face on the Fuel Station Canopy fascia shall be no larger than eight (8) square feet fifty (50) percent of the canopy area, and may be displayed one (1) time on each side of the canopy that faces a primary street.
 - (2) To achieve said illumination a ninety (90) degree cutoff luminary, which directs the lighting towards the ground underneath should be used, unless lighting is directed towards the building. At no time shall lighting illuminate adjacent residential property or interfere with safe vehicular travel.

11.9.2 Wall Signs

Wall signs including glassed areas shall be limited to one (1) square foot per two (2) linear feet of building frontage on which the sign is attached. Individual wall signs shall not exceed 100 square feet. All wall and window signage shall be compliant with the following:

- (A) No wall signs shall protrude more than twelve (12) inches from the wall to which it is attached.
- (B) No wall signs shall extend beyond the parapet or eave line as appropriate of the building to which it is attached. If the building consists of more than two (2) stories, wall signs shall not extend above the second story.
- (C) Wall signs shall not cover up or interrupt architectural features.
- (D) Window signage counts towards the total allowed and shall not to exceed twenty five (25) percent on a glazed area.
- (E) Multiple street facades (corner lot) shall be allowed signage on each street facing façade.

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

11.9.3 Blade Signs (Projecting Signs)

Blade Signs are allowed with the following regulations:

- (A) One (1) non-illuminated blade sign is allowed per business establishment.
- (B) Any blade sign must have eight (8) or more feet of vertical clearance from the ground or sidewalk level.
- (C) Any blade sign shall be no higher than sixteen (16) feet above the ground or sidewalk.
- (D) A blade sign may project no more than three (3) feet from the building wall and shall be no more than four (4) square feet in area per display surface.
- (E) Such signs shall be stationary.

11.9.4 Awning Signs

Awnings may be erected and displayed in compliance with the following regulations.

- (A) Maximum of sixteen (16) square feet in signage area on canopy/awning per business establishment.
- (B) No backlit awnings are permitted.
- (C) No neon is allowed on awnings.
- (D) No metal bar or framing or other solid shall be less than eight (8) feet above the ground or sidewalk and that includes any flexible cloth, canvas or similar skirt that may hang below the frame.
- (E) One (1) sign per business establishment may be suspended from or attached to the underside of a canopy/awning, provided such sign does not exceed six (6) square feet in area and maintains a clear distance of at least eight (8) feet between the sidewalk grade and the bottom of the sign.

Section 11.10 Noncompliance.

- (A) The UDO Administrator or code enforcement officer shall cause to be removed any unauthorized, permanent, temporary or portable sign erected or situated upon public property, including the State or Town owned right-of-way.
- (B) The UDO Administrator or code enforcement officer shall cause to be removed any unauthorized, permanent, temporary or portable sign erected or situated upon private property by citing the owner or agent of the owner of the property with a notice of violation and requesting immediate removal.

ARTICLE 11. SIGN REGULATIONS

- (1) Failure to immediately remove the sign upon notice shall result in a fine as set forth in the Town's fee schedule as established by the City Council and filed in the office of the City Clerk. Said fine accruing each day that the sign is permitted to remain, such that each day a violation continues shall be considered a separate offense.
- (2) Removed signs will be held by the Planning and Inspections Department for not more than seven (7) days. Removed signs may be retrieved during that time by owners upon release by the Planning and Inspections Department and payment of a fine as set forth in the Town's fee schedule as established by the City Council and filed in the office of the City Clerk.
- (3) After seven (7) days, all signs removed from public property shall be considered disposable.